

Decision 02-11-016 November 7, 2002

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

In the Matter of the Application of Choice Telecom, LLC for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to Operate as a Provider of Non-Facilities-Based Resold Local Exchange Telecommunications Services Within the State of California.

Application 02-07-040  
(Filed July 22, 2002)

**O P I N I O N**

**I. Summary**

Choice Telecom, LLC (Applicant) seeks a certificate of public convenience and necessity (CPCN) under Pub. Util. Code § 1001 for authority to provide resold local exchange telecommunications services. By this decision, we grant the requested authority subject to the terms and conditions set forth below.

**II. Background**

In prior decisions we authorized the provision of competitive local exchange service, by carriers meeting specified criteria, within the service territories of Pacific Bell Telephone Company (Pacific), Verizon California Inc. (Verizon), Roseville Telephone Company (RTC), and Citizens Telecommunications Company of California, Inc. (CTC).

Applicant, a California corporation, seeks authority to provide resold local exchange services as a competitive local carrier (CLC) throughout Pacific and Verizon's service territories. Applicant's principal place of business is located at 1132 Nimitz Drive, Broadmoor, CA 94015.

### **III. Financial Qualifications**

To be granted a CPCN, an applicant for authority to provide resold local exchange services must demonstrate that it has a minimum of \$25,000 of cash or cash equivalent to meet the firm's start-up expenses.<sup>1</sup> An applicant must also demonstrate that it has sufficient additional resources to cover all deposits required by local exchange carriers (LECs) and/or interexchange carriers (IECs) in order to provide the proposed service.<sup>2</sup> Applicant provided bank statements that demonstrate that it has sufficient cash to satisfy the financial requirement, including any required deposits.

### **IV. Technical Qualifications**

Applicants for CLC authority are required to make a reasonable showing of technical expertise in telecommunications or a related business. Applicant submitted biographical information on its officers that demonstrates that it possesses sufficient experience and knowledge to operate as a telecommunications provider.

Applicant represents that no one associated with or employed by Applicant as an affiliate, officer, director, partner, or owner of more than 10% of Applicant was previously associated with any telecommunications carrier that filed for bankruptcy or went out of business, or was sanctioned by the Federal Communications Commission or any state regulatory agency for failure to comply with any regulatory statute, rule, or order.

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<sup>1</sup> The financial requirement for CLCs is contained in Decision (D.) 95-12-056, Appendix C.

<sup>2</sup> The requirement for CLC applicants to demonstrate that they have additional financial resources to meet any deposits required by underlying LECs and/or IECs is set forth in D.95-12-056, Appendix C.

## **V. Tariffs**

Commission staff reviewed Applicant's draft tariffs for compliance with Commission rules and regulations. The deficiencies are noted in Attachment A to this decision. Applicant shall correct these deficiencies in its tariff compliance filing as a condition of our approval of its tariffs.

## **VI. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

CEQA requires the Commission as the designated lead agency to assess the potential environmental impact of a project in order that adverse effects are avoided, alternatives are investigated, and environmental quality is restored or enhanced to the fullest extent possible. Applicant represents that it will not be constructing any facilities for the purpose of providing local exchange services. Therefore, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that granting this application will have an adverse effect upon the environment. Applicant must file for additional authority, and submit to any required CEQA review, before it can construct facilities other than equipment to be installed in existing buildings or structures.

## **VII. Categorization and Need for Hearings**

In Resolution ALJ 176-3093 dated August 22, 2002, the Commission preliminarily categorized this application as ratesetting, and preliminarily determined that hearings were not necessary. No protests have been received. There is no apparent reason why the application should not be granted. Given these developments, a public hearing is not necessary, and it is not necessary to disturb the preliminary determinations.

## **VIII. Comments on Draft Decision**

This is an uncontested matter, in which the decision grants the relief requested. Accordingly, pursuant to Pub. Util. Code Section 311(g)(2), the

otherwise applicable 30-day period for public review and comment is being waived.

## **IX. Conclusion**

We conclude that the application conforms to our rules for authority to provide competitive local exchange telecommunications services. Accordingly, we shall approve the application subject to the terms and conditions set forth herein.

## **X. Assignment of Proceeding**

Michael Peevey is the Assigned Commissioner and Karl Bemmesderfer is the assigned Administrative Law Judge in this proceeding.

## **Findings of Fact**

1. Notice of the application appeared in the Daily Calendar on July 30, 2002.
2. No protests have been filed.
3. A hearing is not required.
4. In prior decisions the Commission authorized competition, by carriers meeting specified criteria, in providing local exchange telecommunications services within the service territories of Pacific, Verizon, RTC and CTC.
5. Applicant has a minimum of \$25,000 of cash or cash equivalent that is reasonably liquid and readily available to meet its start-up expenses.
6. Applicant has sufficient additional cash or cash equivalent to cover any deposits that may be required by other telecommunications carriers in order to provide the proposed service.
7. Applicant possesses sufficient experience and knowledge to provide telecommunications services.
8. As part of its application, Applicant submitted a draft of its initial tariff that contained the deficiencies identified in Attachment A to this decision.

Except for those deficiencies, its draft tariffs complied with the Commission's requirements.

9. Applicant will not be constructing facilities to provide the telecommunications services.

### **Conclusions of Law**

1. Applicant has the financial ability to provide the proposed service.

2. Applicant has sufficient technical expertise to operate as a telecommunications carrier.

3. Public convenience and necessity require that Applicant's competitive local exchange service be subject to the terms and conditions set forth herein.

4. Since Applicant will not be constructing any facilities, it can be seen with certainty that there will be no significant effect on the environment.

5. The application should be granted to the extent set forth below.

6. Applicant, once granted a CPCN, should be subject to the applicable Commission rules, decisions, General Orders, and statutes that pertain to California public utilities.

7. Applicant's initial tariff filing should correct the deficiencies in its draft tariffs as indicated in Attachment A to this decision.

8. Because of the public interest in competitive local exchange services, the following order should be effective immediately.

### **O R D E R**

**IT IS ORDERED** that:

1. A certificate of public convenience and necessity (CPCN) is granted to Choice Telecomm, LLC (Applicant) to operate as a resale provider of competitive local exchange services subject to the terms and conditions set forth below.

2. Applicant is authorized to provide local exchange service in the service territories of Pacific Bell Telephone Company and Verizon California Inc.

3. Applicant is authorized to file tariff schedules for the provision of competitive local exchange services with the deficiencies noted in Attachment A corrected. Applicant may not offer services until tariffs are on file. Applicant's initial filing shall be made in accordance with General Order (GO) 96-A, excluding Sections IV, V, and VI. The tariff shall be effective not less than 1 day after tariff approval by the Commission's Telecommunications Division. Applicant shall comply with its tariffs.

4. The certificate granted, and the authority to render service under the rates, charges, and rules authorized, will expire if not exercised within 12 months after the effective date of this order.

5. The corporate identification number assigned to Applicant (U-6733-C) shall be included in the caption of all original filings with this Commission, and in the titles of other pleadings filed in existing cases.

6. Applicant shall comply with all applicable rules adopted in the Local Exchange Competition proceeding (Rulemaking 95-04-043/Investigation 95-04-044), as well as all other applicable Commission rules, decisions, General Orders, and statutes that pertain to California public utilities, subject to the exemptions granted in this decision.

7. Applicant shall comply with the requirements applicable to competitive local exchange carriers included in Attachment B to this decision.

8. Applicant is not authorized to construct facilities, other than equipment to be installed in existing buildings or structures.

9. This application is closed.

This order is effective today.

Dated November 7, 2002, at San Francisco, California.

LORETTA M. LYNCH

President

HENRY M. DUQUE

CARL W. WOOD

GEOFFREY F. BROWN

MICHAEL R. PEEVEY

Commissioners

## **ATTACHMENT A**

List of deficiencies in tariffs filed by Choice Telecomm, LLC in A.02-07-040 to be corrected in its tariff compliance filing.

1. On the top right-hand corner of every tariff sheet, add the words “Cal. P.U.C. Schedule No. 1-T.”
2. Sheet 8: Include the actual service area map in the CLC tariff.
3. Sheet 13, Rule 2: Include the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph from Rule 2 of Appendix B of D.95-07-054 in the CLC tariff.
4. Sheet 18, Rule 8: Change the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence of the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph as follows, “The undisputed portion of the bill must be paid by the Due By Date (No Sooner than 15 days of the date of presentation) shown on the bill or the service will be subject to disconnection if the CLC has notified the customers by written notice of such delinquency and impending termination. Refer to Rule 8B of Appendix B of D.95-07-054. Also include Rule 8G from Appendix B of D.95-07-054 in the CLC tariff.
5. Sheet 19, Rule 10B: Remove the words “without incurring any liability” from Rule 10B(1)V, 10B(1)VI and 10B(2) of the CLC tariff. The CLC needs to concur with Pacific or Verizon’s Limitation of Liability tariff. Refer to D.95-12-057.
6. Sheet 32, Rule 27: Include the fees and surcharges show in Attachment B to this decision.
7. Sheet 34, Rule 30: Remove Rule 30B from the CLC tariff. The CLC needs to concur with Pacific or Verizon’s Limitation of Liability regarding credit for service interruptions. Refer to D.95-12-057.
8. Sheet 46, Rule 36: Include rule on how telephone directories will be provided to residential and business customers.
9. Sheet 51: Include the following Income Limitation for ULTS:

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Income Limitation</u>
1-2	\$19,300
3	22,800
4	27,400
Each additional member	4,600

10. The CLC must have a demarcation tariff or concur in another company’s tariff.

**(END OF ATTACHMENT A)**



**ATTACHMENT B**

**REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO COMPETITIVE LOCAL EXCHANGE CARRIERS AND NON-DOMINANT INTEREXCHANGE CARRIERS**

1. Applicant shall file a written acceptance of the certificate granted in this proceeding.
2. Applicant is subject to:
  - a. The current 1.45% surcharge applicable to all intrastate services except for those excluded by D.94-09-065, as modified by D.95-02-050, to fund the Universal Lifeline Telephone Service Trust Administrative Committee Fund (Pub. Util. Code § 879; Resolution T-16594, October 10, 2001);
  - b. The current 0.300% surcharge applicable to all intrastate services except for those excluded by D.94-09-065, as modified by D.95-02-050, to fund the California Relay Service and Communications Devices Fund (Pub. Util. Code § 2881; D.98-12-073 and Resolution T-16663, August 22, 2002);
  - c. The user fee provided in Pub. Util. Code §§ 431-435, which is 0.11% of gross intrastate revenue (Resolution M-4804);
  - d. The current surcharge applicable to all intrastate services except for those excluded by D.94-09-065, as modified by D.95-02-050, to fund the California High Cost Fund-A (Pub. Util. Code § 739.3; D.96-10-066, pp. 3-4, App. B, Rule 1.C; set by Resolution T-16550 at 0.360%, October 10, 2001);
  - e. The current 1.42% surcharge applicable to all intrastate services except for those excluded by D.94-09-065, as modified by D.95-02-050, to fund the California High Cost Fund-B (D.96-10-066, p. 191, App. B, Rule 6.F., Resolution T-16554, October 25, 2001); and
  - f. The current 0.300% surcharge applicable to all intrastate services except for those excluded by D.94-09-065, as modified by D.95-02-050, to fund the California Teleconnect Fund (D.96-10-066, p. 88, App. B, Rule 8.G, Resolution T-16584, October 10, 2001).

3. Applicant is a competitive local exchange carrier (CLC). The effectiveness of its future tariffs is subject to the schedules set forth in Appendix C, Section 4.E of Decision (D.) 95-12-056:

“E. CLCs shall be subject to the following tariff and contract filing, revision and service pricing standards:

- “(1) Uniform rate reductions for existing tariff services shall become effective on five (5) working days’ notice. Customer notification is not required for rate decreases.
- “(2) Uniform major rate increases for existing tariff services shall become effective on thirty (30) days’ notice to the Commission, and shall require bill inserts, or first class mail notice to customers at least 30 days in advance of the pending rate increase.
- “(3) Uniform minor rate increases, as defined in D.90-11-029, shall become effective on not less than (5) working days’ notice to the Commission. Customer notification is not required for such minor rate increases.
- “(4) Advice letter filings for new services and for all other types of tariff revisions, except changes in text not affecting rates or relocations of text in the tariff schedules, shall become effective on forty (40) days’ notice.
- “(5) Advice letter filings revising the text or location of text material which do not result in an increase in any rate or charge shall become effective on not less than five (5) days’ notice to the Commission.”
- “(6) Contracts shall be subject to GO 96-A rules for NDIECS, except interconnection contracts.
- “(7) CLCs shall file tariffs in accordance with PU Code § 876.”

4. Applicant is a nondominant interexchange carrier (NDIEC). The effectiveness of its future NDIEC tariffs is subject to the schedules set forth in Ordering

Paragraph 5 of D.90-08-032 (37 CPUC2d 130 at 158), as modified by D.91-12-013 (42 CPUC2d 220 at 231) and D.92-06-034 (44 CPUC2d 617 at 618):

- “5. All NDIECs are hereby placed on notice that their California tariff filings will be processed in accordance with the following effectiveness schedule:
  - “a. Inclusion of FCC-approved rates for interstate services in California public utilities tariff schedules shall become effective on one (1) day’s notice.
  - “b. Uniform rate reductions for existing services shall become effective on five (5) days’ notice.
  - “c. Uniform rate increases, except for minor rate increases, for existing services shall become effective on thirty (30) days’ notice, and shall require bill inserts, a message on the bill itself, or first class mail notice to customers of the pending increased rates.
  - “d. Uniform minor rate increases, as defined in D.90-11-029, for existing services shall become effective on not less than five (5) working days’ notice. Customer notification is not required for such minor rate increases.”
  - “e. Advice letter filings for new services and for all other types of tariff revisions, except changes in text not affecting rates or relocations of text in the tariff schedules, shall become effective on forty (40) days’ notice.
  - “f. Advice letter filings merely revising the text or location of text material which do not cause an increase in any rate or charge shall become effective on not less than five (5) days’ notice.”

5. Applicant may deviate from the following provisions of GO 96-A:

(a) paragraph II.C.(1)(b), which requires consecutive sheet numbering and prohibits the reuse of sheet numbers; and (b) paragraph II.C.(4), which requires that “a separate sheet or series of sheets should be used for each rule.” Tariff

filings incorporating these deviations shall be subject to the approval of the Commission's Telecommunications Division. Tariff filings shall reflect all fees and surcharges to which Applicant is subject, as reflected in 2 above.

6. Applicant shall file a service area map as part of its initial tariff.

7. Prior to initiating service, Applicant shall provide the Commission's Consumer Services Division with the name and phone number of its designated contact person(s) for purposes of resolving consumer complaints. This information shall be updated if the name or telephone number changes, or at least annually.

8. Applicant shall notify this Commission in writing of the date that local exchange service is first rendered to the public, no later than five days after service first begins.

9. Applicant shall notify this Commission in writing of the date interLATA service is first rendered to the public within five days after service begins, and again within five days after intraLATA service begins.<sup>3</sup>

10. Applicant shall keep its books and records in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

11. In the event Applicant's books and records are required for inspection by the Commission or its staff, it shall either produce such records at the Commission's offices or reimburse the Commission for the reasonable costs incurred in having Commission staff travel to its office.

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<sup>3</sup> California is divided into ten Local Access and Transport Areas (LATAs), each containing numerous local telephone exchanges. InterLATA describes services, revenues and functions relating to telecommunications originating within one LATA and terminating in another LATA. IntraLATA describes services, revenues and functions relating to telecommunications originating within a single LATA.

12. Applicant shall file an annual report, in compliance with GO 104-A, on a calendar-year basis with the information contained in Attachment C to this decision.
13. Applicant shall ensure that its employees comply with the provisions of Public Utilities (Pub. Util.) Code § 2889.5 regarding solicitation of customers.
14. Within 60 days of the effective date of this order, Applicant shall comply with Pub. Util. Code § 708, Employee Identification Cards, and notify the Director of the Telecommunications Division in writing of its compliance.
15. If Applicant is 90 days or more late in filing an annual report, or in remitting the surcharges and fee listed in 2 above, the Commission's Telecommunications Division shall prepare for Commission consideration a resolution that revokes Applicant's CPCN unless it has received written permission from the Telecommunications Division to file or remit late.
16. Applicant is exempt from General Order 96-A, subsections III.G (1) and (2), and Commission Rule of Practice and Procedure 18(b).
17. Applicant is exempt from Pub. Util. Code §§ 816-830.
18. Applicant is exempt from the requirements of Pub. Util. Code § 851 for the transfer or encumbrance of property whenever such transfer or encumbrance serves to secure debt.
19. Applicant shall send a copy of this decision to concerned local permitting agencies not later than 30 days from the date of this order.

**(END OF ATTACHMENT B)**

## **ATTACHMENT C ANNUAL REPORT**

An original and two copies shall be filed with the California Public Utilities Commission, 505 Van Ness Avenue, Room 3251, San Francisco, CA 94102-3298, no later than March 31st of the year following the calendar year for which the annual report is submitted.

Failure to file this information on time may result in a penalty as provided for in §§ 2107 and 2108 of the Public Utilities Code.

Required information:

1. Exact legal name and U # of reporting utility.
2. Address.
3. Name, title, address, and telephone number of the person to be contacted concerning the reported information.
4. Name and title of the officer having custody of the general books of account and the address of the office where such books are kept.
5. Type of organization (*e.g.*, corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, etc.).

If incorporated, specify:

- a. Date of filing articles of incorporation with the Secretary of State.
  - b. State in which incorporated.
6. The number and date of the Commission decision granting the Utility's CPCN.
7. Date operations were begun.
8. Description of other business activities in which the utility is engaged.
9. A list of all affiliated companies and their relationship to the utility. State if affiliate is:
  - a. Regulated public utility.
  - b. Publicly held corporation.
10. Balance sheet as of December 31st of the year for which information is submitted.
11. Income statement for California operations for the calendar year for which information is submitted.

For answers to any questions concerning this report, call (415) 703-1961.

**(END OF ATTACHMENT C)**